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Stages of Socio-Economic Development: Shah Wali-Allah's Concept of *al-Irtifaqat*

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Introduction

Research on economic ideas of the past thinkers of the East has been long due on professional economists. The reason for not initiating such a task may be the theory propagated by some Western historians of economic thought that there was a great gap in economic thinking before the awakening of Europe in the twelfth century.¹ Thus researchers took it for granted that if there was nothing worth mentioning in the West, it was not to be found anywhere else.

At present abundant literature has appeared to refute this stand,² but the thinkers of the sub-continent still await the attention of economists. They have to offer a lot of economic ideas in miscellaneous works such as biographies and history books on great Mughals, works on ethics and religion, philosophy and sociology by *ulama*, *sufis* and reformers. The economic reforms by Sultan 'Ala' al-Din Khalji, issuance of token money by Sultan Muhammad Tughluq, survey and measurement of land by Sher Shah Suri, etc. must have been associated with certain economic ideas.

Shah Wali Allah Dehlawi (1703-1762) being the most prominent thinker of Muslim India, naturally takes the lead in attracting attention. There are a few articles and treatises, based on his one or two works presenting some aspects of his economic thinking.³ But a comprehensive survey of all his works and presentation of his economic ideas in a systematic way is still to be made. In the present paper we propose to introduce only his concept of *al-irtifaqat*, that is, stages of socio-economic developments, and hope that this will arouse curiosity and generate interest in further researches.

Importance of Shah Wali-Allah's ideas lies in his expert analysis and diagnosis of the causes of the decaying Mughal rule, his suggestions of economic reforms and his concept of *al-irtifaqat*, an evolutionary view of socio-economic development.

Shah Wali-Allah, the Man and His Environment

Ahmad bin Abd al-Rahim, popularly known as Shah Wali-Allah Dehlawi, born on 21st September, 1703 and died on 22nd August, 1762, saw the reign of five Mughal kings. The birth of Shah Wali-Allah, in the period of decline of the great Mughal dynasty of Babar in India, was no less than a miracle for many of those who noticed the steady decline of science and original thinking among Muslims since centuries side by side with the decline of Muslim rules and their political strength. Shah Wali-Allah was well versed in all existing sciences of the time. His contributions include commentaries on the Qur'an and Hadith, their principles, *fiqh*, principles of jurisprudence, *ilm al-kalam*, wisdom (*hikmat*) and philosophy of Shariah, etc. In 1730, he travelled to Hijaz where he stayed for about two years benefitting from great scholars at the two Holy Mosques. It was the same time when Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792) carried his revolutionary reforms in Najd region of the Arabian peninsula. There is no record of the two meeting or coming across each other. Shah Wali-Allah's reformist movement was more comprehensive as he not only attacked the innovations (*bid'at*) in the religion, but also tried to bring reforms in education, economy, the society and in the government as well. It may safely be said that he was parallel to Ibn Taimiyah (d. 1328 C.E.).

Economic Ideas in his Works

Economic ideas of Shah Wali-Allah are found in his different works such as *Hujjat-Allah al-Balighah*, *al-Budur al-Bazighah*, *al-Tafhimat al-Ilahiyah* and his numerous letters addressed to different rulers, governors, nobles and friends. Especially in his letters, he is seen to hold the economic factors as outstandingly responsible for the weakening and decline of the Mughal Empire in India, a subject which still perplexes many. The diagnosis by Shah Wali-Allah is by a contemporary scholar who has studied the situation from very close quarters. It will be interesting and useful to note them here so that his economic ideas may be related to them.

Economic Factors Responsible for Decadence of Mughal Rule in India

Shah Wali-Allah lived in an age of crisis and chaos created by the Maratha, Jats, Sikhs, Ruhillas and other ambitious governors of the provinces. The rule of Mughal kings was literally confined to the area between the Red Fort and Palam. Peasants and artisans were badly hit; they had to pay taxes more than once a year to frequently changing wielders of powers. Salaries of army men and other officials were not paid for months.⁴ The Mughal kings, in spite of having the image of rightful owner of authority, were helpless. The main reasons for the decline of Mughal rule, as seen by Shah Wali-Allah, and his suggestions for reform, were as following:

1. *The indigence of the imperial treasury.* The state treasury is the backbone of any government which cannot function without sufficient resources. According to Shah Wali-Allah, revenues of the country were estimated at eight *crore* rupees, but the authority and power needed to realize it were lost by the central governments.⁵

2. *Contraction of Khalisah land.* *Khalisah* refers to the area treated as the state property. Its revenue was collected directly by officials of the king, in contrast to *jagir* lands where revenues were collected by the *jagirdar* (feudal lord). *Khalisah* was the most important source of income for the government, and every wise ruler tried to expand its area. Wali-Allah suggested that the *Khalisah* area should be expanded, especially to the region surrounding Delhi, Hissar and Sirhind. All or most of it must be *Khalisah* as the reason for weakening of the government is diminution of *Khalisah* and consequently indigence of treasury.⁶

3. *Increasing number of jagirs (fief).* The natural corollary of decreasing *Khalisah* land was an increase in the number of small *jagirdars*, who were generally unable to control their areas and rented out their lands, a situation prone to oppression and exploitation. Shah Wali-Allah suggested that the *jagirs* should be granted to chiefs only. The smaller nobles should be paid in cash as was the practice during the reign of Shahjahan, because the small *jagirdars* just rented out their lands and mostly remained in need of money and did not fully discharge their duties assigned by the royal court.⁷

4. *Irregularity in payment to army and government officials.* Another important reason for decline of the Mughal rule was default in payment to army and other officials. No doubt, it was due to the reason mentioned earlier, i.e., indigence of the Treasury. Shah Wali-Allah suggested that their salaries should be paid without delay, otherwise they would be forced to borrow money on interest which will cause much loss to them and they might not carry out their duties properly.⁸

5. *Heavy burden of taxation and decline in production.* To meet the government expenses, farmers, artisans and producers were heavily taxed, the direct result of which was decreasing interest in their occupations and decline in production. In his book *Hujjat-Allah al-Balighah*,

Shah Wali-Allah says, ".....Another reason (for bad condition of cities in this age) is heavy taxation on farmers, traders, artisans, etc. and harsh treatment in collection of those taxes."⁹

6. *Luxurious living*. Economic factors were the main reasons but they were not the only reasons for decadence of Mughal rule. Giving into luxurious living, moral decay, social disparity and political anarchy, were some other reasons pointed out by Shah Wali-Allah and he endeavoured for their reform.¹⁰ It is not possible to discuss all these factors here. To Shah Wali-Allah, all these were violation of *al-irtifaqat al-salihah* (good socio-economic life and the courses of action required for betterment of it). All his economic ideas revolve around the concept of *al-irtifaqat* and its four stages. Let us examine them in some details.

His Concept of *al-Irtifaqat*

Irtifaq is an Arabic word with the root of r.f.q. which means being soft, convenient, kind, helping, benefitting, etc. The word *irtifaq* refers to adopting convenient ways, helping devices, beneficial methods, useful technology, and good manners in one's life. Shah Wali-Allah uses it in a special sense denoting different stage of socio-economic development of mankind. According to him, starting from simple primitive village life to an international community, the socio-economic development of human society can be divided into four stages. The first stage is dominated by simple economic struggle while the last stage is developed to maintain just political order on international level, to safeguard the socio-economic interests of different states and establish peace and justice among them. All economic ideas of Shah Wali-Allah are related, in some way or the other, to his concept of *irtifaqat* or stages of socio-economic development. We will examine his economic ideas under different stages.

***Al-Irtifaq al-Awwal* or the First Stage of Socio-Economic Development**

The first stage of socio-economic development is based on animal living (*al-irtifaq al-baha'imi*), distinguished in clarity, communication, refinement and intelligence.¹¹ Under the first stage man is guided to acquire the power of speech to express his thought in natural way without any hindrance. In this stage he becomes acquainted with foodstuffs suited to his physical constitution, and learns how they are to be eaten and digested. He should also know methods of their cultivation, irrigation, harvest and preservation, and the ways of preparing and cooking them, and how to benefit from animals by obtaining meat, milk and butter. Similarly, he should know the uses of vegetables as well as the ways of getting water and its storage. He should be familiar with domesticating of animals to use them for works otherwise hard to perform, such as ploughing the land, riding over them and benefitting from their milk, meat and wool. To have a shelter to protect themselves from rain, heat and cold. Use of garments made of animals' skins or leaves of trees or artificially prepared, is also part of this stage. And it is in this stage that man is led to acquire for himself an uncontested wife to satisfy his sexual urge and to reproduce off-springs.¹² In this stage man develops simple crafts for agriculture and domestication of animals, and seeks assistance of others through primitive exchange and limited cooperation. The social organization is led by the person who possesses relatively a higher quality of sound judgment and power to subordinate others. There should be a set pattern to resolve their disputes, punish the transgressor and offender. On intellectual level, there should be one who could discover ways of *al-irtifaq* according to their condition, so that others might follow him.¹³

From Shah Wali-Allah's foregoing description of the first stage of *al-irtifaq*, it appears that he keeps in mind the standard of civilization and socio-economic conditions of village folk. It is a stage of fulfilling the basic needs - food, shelter, clothing, justice, etc. - which a man desires by his nature. Economic problems of what, how and for whom, are solved by traditions. There is least division of labour and no development of market. It is a

stage that distinguishes human society from the animal life and it is a pre-requisite for the second stage of socio-economic development.

***Al-Irtifaq al-Thani* or the Second Stage of Socio-Economic Development**

Man enters the second stage of socio-economic development when he gets over the problems of his natural needs of food, drink, clothing, etc.¹⁴ and there is expansion of the first stage with behavioural knowledge and good morals.¹⁵ Complexity of life increases in this stages and need arises for suitable institutions and prudent measure conducive to progress. In this stage, by deduction, Shah Wali-Allah determines the following five kinds of wisdom (*hikmat*):

1. *Al-Hikmat al-Ma'ashiyah* or the wisdom pertaining to the way of living, with reference to consistency in conduct and practical knowledge about eating, drinking, dressing, dwelling, etiquette, manner of conversation, mode of travelling, etc.
2. *Al-Hikmat al-Manziliyah* or the wisdom of domestic life which pertains to married life, rearing of children, obligations towards relatives, management and manners of companionship, etc.
3. *Al-Hikmat al-Iktisabiyah* or the wisdom of earning a livelihood, which involves the various occupations people pursue, befitting their personal capacities and the means that help them in their crafts like carpentry, smithy and so on.
4. *Al-Hikmat al-Ta'amuliyah* or the wisdom of mutual dealings, which concerns purchase and sale, giving presents, tenancy, lending, debt, mortgage, *waqf*, etc.
5. *Al-Hikmat al-Ta'awuniyah* or the wisdom of cooperation which relates to standing surety, silent partnership, commercial enterprise, power of attorney and tenure.¹⁶

Out of the five types of wisdom mentioned above, the first two are related to sociological studies while the last three are subject of economics. As mentioned earlier, the second stage is based on the first stage and there is no division in water-tight compartments.¹⁷ Thus, the activities mentioned in this stage under first two categories are also found in the first stage, the difference being in refinement and improvement. For example, man should fulfill his need of food, drink, cleanliness, decoration, clothing, accommodation, talking, walking, travelling, selling, intercourse, treatment of diseases, and living with wife and children according to noble and elevated ethical requirement of piety as enjoined by religion.¹⁸ In his book *al-Budur al-Bazighah*, he describes, in this regard, details of the standard desirable for an average person.¹⁹ Since they do not much concern our theme, we will take up the remaining categories of this stage. The last three types of wisdom are actually meant to develop and strengthen man's socio-economic life. Let us study them in some details.

Al-Hikmah al-Iktisabiyah

Division of labour, specialization, diversity of occupation, and use of money are aspects of Shah Wali-Allah's *al-hikmat al-iktisabiyah* under the second *irtifaqat*.

Division of Labour

According to Shah Wali-Allah, the need for division of labour arises due to a variety of needs of the people which a single household cannot meet without the help of others if they want to come out of the first stage of the *irtifaq*.²⁰ He gives the example of agricultural production

which requires trained animals, services of carpenters, blacksmiths and other services. He gives examples of food production and cloth manufacturing also. If a single household tries to do all these things, they cannot cross the first stage of socio-economic development.²¹ Thus, the second stage necessitates a well organized division of labour which will lead to skill and specialization as well as diversity of occupation.

According to Shah Wali-Allah, the basic occupations are agriculture, grazing animals, acquiring free products of sea and land such as metal, trees, animals, and industries like carpentry, iron work, weaving, etc. In the second stage comes trade, management of city, provision of anything which people need, and so on.²² According to him, there are two factors of specialization for a person in a particular job:

1. Physical capability, for example, a strong man is good for war; an intelligent person with good memory is fit for mathematics; and a strong healthy man is suitable for carrying loads and burdensome work.

2. Incidental advantages, for example, the son or neighbor of a blacksmith can easily take to the iron work, and person living near the sea has the facility of taking up fishing which others do not enjoy.²³

Diversity of occupation and specialization in a job in which one has facilities is necessary for healthy development of socio-economic life. To Shah Wali-Allah, one of the reasons for having the provision of *fard kifayah* i.e., socially obligatory duty is to facilitate diversity of occupation and specialization. This is in those jobs in which concentration of all people would have led to the deterioration in their living condition and giving up of socio-economic advantages. In those cases it would have not been possible to assign some people for a particular job and some others to another job...as everyone has advantages in something which the other has not.²⁴

Shah Wali-Allah suggests that a wise person should select a job sufficient to meet his needs. He should not follow blindly the family tradition in selection of a job which may not suit him.²⁵ He advises municipal authorities that they should be vigilant to people's selection of jobs and should exercise some types of control, if necessary, to ensure that they do not concentrate on few jobs, leaving the others unattended, and to check the engagement of more people in production of luxuries and stop their involvement in socially undesirable production.²⁶

Opportunity Cost

While discussing the socially desirable and beneficial products, Shah Wali-Allah gives very clearly the concept of opportunity cost. He says, "If a large number of people involves in such job (that is, production of luxuries), they will correspondingly neglect jobs of trade and agriculture. If the chief of the city spends public fund on such items, he will be equally losing the welfare of the city."²⁷ Obviously, the purpose of this statement is to draw the attention of authority to take it into account while selection of a project and allocation of scarce resources to various public purposes.

Use of Money

Division of labour and specialization lead to the need for exchange which can be done easily through an object that can be used as medium. This leads to invention of money. Thus, it is the second stage of socio-economic development in which use of money appears. According to Shah Wali-Allah, money should be a durable object and commonly accepted by people in their transactions.²⁸ In his book *al-Budur al-Bazighah*, he says that money should not have its own utility. The only condition is that it should be accepted in exchange.²⁹ In *Hujjat-Allah al-Balighah* he mentions that gold and silver are most suitable to be used as money because they are easily divisible into small pieces, their different units have similarity, and they are of *great*

benefit to human physique and may serve as adoration. Thus, they are money by nature, while other materials may be treated as money by convention.³⁰ In this way he goes against those who say that money should not have its own use. By differentiating between money by nature (gold and silver) and the token money (other metallic coins and paper money), he provides a ground for different rules and on different obligations in the wake of swiftly changing value of token money.

Al-Hikmat al-Ta'amuliyah

Under this, Shah Wali-Allah includes trade, hiring, donation, loan and mortgage. These dealings are inevitable for an economy based on division of labour and specialization, otherwise people cannot maintain their second stage of socio-economic development. Motives behind these activities are to benefit from the product of others by exchange or to secure the prosperity of people necessary for fulfillment of needs and cooperation for that purpose, and to adopt values such as generosity, honesty, faithfulness, etc. In these mutual dealings, goods or services are extended to others for the pleasure of Allah to brighten ones prospects in the Hereafter. Shah Wali-Allah has defined these contracts on the patterns of Muslim jurists and elaborated the important instructions of Shar'iah to fulfill the requirement of *validity* and *equity*.³¹ He has also discussed the wisdom of different teachings of Islam regarding these contracts of mutual dealings in some details in his book *Hujjat-Allah al-Balighah*.³² On another occasion he mentions some more institutions of mutual dealings based on virtue and benevolence, such as *sadaqah* (charity), *wasiyah* (will) and *waqf* (religious endowment and trusts).³³ He maintains that the idea of *waqf* was unknown to the people before Islam. This institution was established by Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) for different welfare considerations. The merit of *waqf* is that the needy people benefit from this source of income generation *while its ownership remains with the endowment maker*.³⁴

Practices Violating Fair Mutual Dealings

To avoid disputes and exploitation, all those deals have been prohibited by Shar'iah which have bad effects. For example, contracts involving uncertainty, deception and double-dealings. Shah Wali-Allah especially takes note of bribery, gambling and practice of interest.³⁵ He says that a little of them attracts a lot of them. Therefore, no outside limit of them is prescribed in the Shar'iah and they are forbidden altogether.³⁶ In his opinion, when practice of interest takes root, it leads to the abandonment of agriculture and industry which are fundamental means of earning a living. Actually both interest and gambling are tantamount to inebriation, as they are in flagrant contravention of the principles Allah has laid down for earning a living.³⁶

Riba'l-Fadl and Riba'l-Nasi'ah

Shah Wali-Allah considers *riba* (interest) in lending as the actual one (*al-riba al-haqiqi*).³⁷ He also takes note of barter exchange with inequality in terms of quantity or time of delivery termed as *riba'l-fadl* and *riba'l-nasi'ah* in the Shar'iah. He regards them interest in similitude (*mahmul alaih*).³⁸ Prohibition of this kind of interest is known by Tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) stating that gold for gold, silver for silver, wheat for wheat, barley for barley, dates for dates, and salt for salt, be exchanged the same for same, in equal quantity and hand to hand. In case these groups are different, then sell them as you like (with unequal quantity) provided the ownership changes hands forthwith. Here the word *riba* is used because of similarity between the two and also to express perversity of such a transaction. And due to frequent use of the word for this kind of transaction, it became established in this sense too.³⁹

According to Shah Wali-Allah, the reason for prohibition of this kind of *riba* is to restrain people's inclination toward excessive pursuit of luxurious living and materialistic

attitudes, because exchange of similar quality of the same good may not satisfy one's thirst for obtaining better quality of the same good.⁴⁰ This argument, however, does not seem very convincing - no one will be ready to depart with higher quality of wheat for an inferior one. Among the earlier scholars Ibn al-Qayyim's (d. 1352 A.D.) argument is more convincing. According to him prohibition of *riba'l-fadl* is to prevent the practice from being instrumental to interest proper. Had the simultaneous payment not been provided along with equality in quantity: the difference in period of payment might lead to difference of quantity according to the time.

Al-Hikmat al-Ta'awuniyah

The fifth wisdom in the second stage of socio-economic development is related to cooperation among the members of the society on economic issues. Shah Wali-Allah says, "This cooperation necessitates itself as people in the society are not equally good for all things. Some of them have good intelligence while some others are imbecile. Some of them have capital, while some others are empty-handed but can work hard. Some people hate to do petty works, while some other do not, and so on. Thus, their mundane life would have become very difficult, had they not sought the cooperation of each other. Take the example of *muzara'ah* (crop-sharing), a person might have land but not bullocks and seeds and not able to work himself. Some other might have two of them or even three. Or take the example of *mudarabah* (profit-sharing), a person might have capital but he cannot persuade himself for trade and travelling or any other such kind of job. Thus, they need cooperation and help of each other. Some people cannot do that directly, so they resort to power of attorney, sponsorship and middlemanship."⁴¹

In his book *Hujjat-Allah al-Balighah*, he defines different forms of partnership which have been discussed in more detail in most of the books on Islamic jurisprudence. He says that these forms of contracts were in practice before the Prophet (peace be upon him). So, they are acceptable to use unless their validity is disputed in general or specifically prohibited by the Prophet (peace be upon him).⁴²

***Al-Irtifaq al-Thalith* or the third Stage of Socio-Economic Development**

With the completion of second stage, the human society develops into a city-state. Shah Wali-Allah emphasizes that city does not mean walls, buildings and market. The city is a kind of relation between different group of people, based on mutual dealings and cooperation.⁴³ The need for preservation of this relationship and prevention of different economic evils leads the society to the third stage of socio-economic development. According to him the city, which is a unit and like a single body, may be exposed to different internal and external diseases. Thus, there is inevitable need of a physician for healthy upkeep of the body of the city. The *imam* or the leader with all associates represents the third stage.⁴⁴ The *imam* is an institution through which integrity, interest and independence of the city is maintained.⁴⁵ In the third stage, the following five institutions are necessary, so that the progress of city-state should continue and check is imposed against corruptions, abuses, disorder and decay.

1. *Al-Qada or judiciary*. When stinginess, envy and disregard of other's rights enter into social life, disputes and disagreements are bound to spring up among the people of a city-state. Hence, there must be an acknowledged institution available to which one may have recourse for an equitable settlement of disputes.

2. *Al-Shahryariyah or executive*. When perverted disposition and pernicious activities, prevail over people and they act accordingly, the city-state becomes deprived and disordered. Therefore, there should be a strong body to take deterrent and punitive measures against such people.

3. *Al-Jihad or police and military force.* People with corrupt nature often take to violent activities, such as murder, robbery or rebellion and deliberately try to disturb the peace and order in a city-state. In order to control such violent situations and preserve the city-state from the misfortune they cause, a defence force, constituted of brave fighters, is essential.

4. *Al-Tawalli Wa'l-Naqabah or welfare and public works.* The city-state has institutions and corporate bodies which make it a perfect state, whereas the lack of them renders guarding it difficult. Things to be taken care of, for example, are defending the frontiers, the construction of wells, markets, bridges, canals, marrying of the orphans, and protection of their properties, distribution of alms among the needy, the distribution of inheritance among heirs, awareness of the condition of the subject and keeping accounts of income and expenditure.

5. *Al-Maw'izah wa'l-Tazkiyah or religious and moral business.* Since faith and true religion cannot dispense with a person to impart knowledge about them though both of them are based on such clear proofs that sane people find the way to them by themselves, the numerous men of corrupt nature who follow their lust and passion and oppose the truth, are in need of a man of wisdom, a teacher of religion to manage the house properly and to conduct themselves correctly towards others.⁴⁶

Shah Wali-Allah advises the *imam* to behave justly with the people and his army and pay due attention to the army and official machinery.⁴⁷ In this stage it will be the duty of the government to see that proper allocation of employment is done in different industries and services. Traders and farmers are encouraged in their professions and arrangement for their proper education also made. Shah Wali-Allah points out the worsening condition of his time in which the requirement of the third stage of socio-economic development is not properly fulfilled. He says: "There are two main reasons of decay of the cities in our time. One, people over burden the *bait al-mal* (public treasury). They have become accustomed of getting their livelihood from it at the pretext of being warriors, educationists, saints, poets, etc. Two, the heavy taxation on farmers, traders and industrialists and harshness to them which causes frustration among the obedient, while evasion and uprising of the strangers. He emphasizes that the city develops with easy taxation and employment of only necessary number of officials."⁴⁸ Shah Wali-Allah gives detailed principles of how the five institutions should be run in the third, stage of socio-economic developments. He also enumerates the qualities of a successful *imam*.⁴⁹

Public Finance

Before we discuss the fourth and the last stage of socioeconomic development, it is worthwhile to give here Shah Wali-Allah's ideas about public finance, rules to be observed in collection of taxes and expenditure of revenues. To him, healthy condition of public finance is necessary for successful achievements in the third and fourth stage of socio-economic development. We have already seen how he regards indigence of *bait al-mal* and its deteriorating condition as the main reason for the weakening and decay of the Mughal rule in India. This was true also about the empires of Persia and Byzantine.⁵⁰

About the rule of taxation, Shah Wali-Allah suggests that there should be a just system of levying and collection of taxes so that people are not hurt and income is adequate to meet the needs of the state.⁵¹ Tax should not be imposed on every person and every goods. It should be on people having farms, wealth, and growing property such as breeding cattle, agriculture and trade. If further money is needed the physically earning population may be included.⁵² It is also recommended that *imam* should have some personal means of support such as uncultivated land to be appropriated and herd of cattle. This will make him independent and relieving to people.⁵³ He does not make clear how far he allows taxation over

and above the sources of income prescribed by Shar'iah, such as *ghanimah* (booty), *fai* (spoil of war), *kharaj* (land tax), *ushr* (tithe), etc. He does not mention *zakah* among the sources of income for a government. Perhaps, because of its divine fixation and prescribed heads of expenditure. Its discussion in his book comes along with the other rites of Islam. Another reason may be the fact that since a long time in Mughal period, the collection and distribution of *zakah* by the government ceased to exist. Its payment and distribution became a private activity only. As far as expenditure is concerned, it is clear that all the necessary institutions mentioned under *al-irtifaq al-thalith* will receive due share. In allocation of funds, the principle will be to take into consideration the most important and the next important (*al-ahamm fa'l-ahamm*).⁵⁴

About the lands captured from infidels after a war, his opinion is that its distribution or otherwise would be left to the *imam* (ruler).⁵⁵ In his book *Izalat al-Khafa* he gives unique interpretation of second Caliph Umar's (mercy be upon him) stand for retaining the land in the hands of its previous owners. He says that the Persian people who fought Muslims soldiers were not the owners of the land conquered; the actual owners were peasants and farmers who surrendered without actual combat.⁵⁶ He opposes grant of any such land to individual whose benefit is required by the society.⁵⁷

Zakah and its expenditure is discussed by Shah Wali-Allah separately. According to him payment of *zakah* is solely to win the pleasure of Allah. It is levied on the main types of wealth precious metals, livestock, trade goods and agricultural products. To make the payment of *zakah* easier a suitable time duration and an exemption limit has been prescribed.⁵⁸ He enumerates spiritual benefit flowing from the payment of *zakah*, and explains different items of *zakah* and reasons for holding them as *zakah* bases.⁵⁹ There is difference of opinions whether sea or hill side products and dry-fruits can be included in the items of *zakah*. Shah Wali-Allah is of the opinion that if the *imam* feels the need for it, he can do it.⁶⁰ As the historical evidences show that in his time *zakah* was not administered by the government, Shah Wali-Allah's opinion seems to be merely an academic one, and just a suggestion only. It shows that he also thinks that collection and distribution of *zakah* will be government's duty. It may establish a separate portfolio for it.

Al-Irtifaq al-Rabi` or the Fourth Stage of Socio-Economic Development

In this stage the human society and the institution of the government adopt international character, and need arises to have a government of all the governments (*Khalifat al-Khulafa*). When third *irtifaq* is completed, and different *imams* (rulers) control their states, having sources of income and support of brave warriors and their protection, enmity, hostility, bitterness and greed lead them to fight each other causing heavy losses of lives and to means of livelihood and destroying all kinds of *irtifaqat*. This necessitates a *Khalifat al-Khulafa* (the ruler of all the rulers).⁶¹ He should be all powerful with men and material so that none could hope to defeat him.⁶² By establishment of such a rule only the countries and people can live peacefully. The caliph may be forced to wage war against those beastly gangs who want to loot and plunder the property and lives of the people.⁶³

Shah Wali-Allah does not assign any economic role to this government of international character except that it will need a lot of men and material to perform its duty of keeping peace, providing justice, and check exploitation. Thus, it should know and manage the levy of different taxes to meet the expenses. He can give financial punishments to the rebellious and unruly sections. But the purpose of such punishment should be reform and to bring them to order, not the collections of funds.⁶⁴ Shah Wali-Allah has described qualities of a good and successful caliph and suggested different measures for making his role firm and effective in discharging his duties.⁶⁵

***Irtifaqat* - A Natural Process of Development**

According to Shah Wali-Allah *irtifaqat* are a natural process.⁶⁶ Whatever differences we notice, are only in the ways viz. how to achieve those *irtifaqat* or due to some people's bad habits, ill-nature and indulgence in lust. The institution of prophethood also aimed at assisting the people towards completion of *irtifaqat* and rectifying the means and methods and removing hurdles in the way. According to Shah Wali-Allah, housekeeping and management of cities are two important chapters of the Qur'anic Shari'ah,⁶⁷ and the task assigned to Prophet Muhammad, (peace be upon him) was to correct the second *irtifaq*, establish the third one and make the religion of Allah spread all over the world and dominant on the pattern of the fourth *irtifaq*.⁶⁸ In this way Shah Wali-Allah combines the socio-economic development with the concept of securing the pleasure of Allah termed by him as '*Iqtirabat*', that is, ways and stages of purifying and spiritually developing oneself.⁶⁹ However, we have confined our discussion to the former only.

It should be noted here that most of the economic ideas presented by Shah Wali-Allah such as specialization and division of labour, need for exchange, evolution of market, analysis of the prohibition of interest and economic system of zakah, public finance, etc., were already discussed by his predecessors like Abu Yusuf (d. 798), al-Ghazali (d. 1111), Ibn Taimiyah (d. 1328), Ibn al-Qayyim (d. 1352), Ibn Khaldun (d. 1406), and others. Shah Wali-Allah's credit is to divide those economic activities into different stages and to relate them to his principle of *irtifaqat*. The first stage is purely traditional in nature when people concentrate on production of necessary and easily exchangeable goods, and use simple agrarian economy (not exactly in the modern sense) where specialization and division of labour develop which necessitates the use of money and relatively more improved technology is used in production process, and expansion in socio-economic activities leads to increased mutual contact and cooperation. It is a very important stage of socio-economic development as most of the basic economic institutions are developed at this stage, to check people from exploiting the economically weaker member of the society, prevent socio-economic evils on the part of the wrong doers and to provide healthy environment and infrastructure for socio-economic progress. The need for the state and the use of some sort of command arises as the economy completes its second stage. By this the human society enters the third stage, and the city-state takes the form of national economy. The state has to ensure the balance growth of the economy.

To prevent the conflict between different states a more powerful government of international character is required which is the final stage in socio-economic development. Shah Wali-Allah does not assign economic role to this government. The reason may be that the internationalism had not assumed the importance by his time. Thus, talking about international economic organizations and institutions would have been beyond the purview of minds. We can safely say that the present age's world organizations and institutions established for cooperation and help of poor nations come within the line of Shah Wali-Allah's thinking and his suggestion of an overlord or *Khalifat al-Khulafa* to check the conflict among the states and exploitation of the economically weak and socially backward states.

Shah Wali-Allah's presentation of a systematic process of socio-economic development in a period when economic discourse was not common among the scholars, places him among the most important contributors of the subject. His concept of *irtifaqat* is so comprehensive that it can accommodate various ideas of growth models presented in the twentieth century.

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7. *Ibid.* p. 42.
8. *Ibid.*
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10. *Ibid.* p.106, *Siyasi Maktubat, op. cit.*, pp. 43, 52, 83, 84. Shah Wali-Allah addresses different sections of the society and warns them of bad consequences of their sinful behaviour, cf. Dehlawi, Shah Wali-Allah, *al-Tafhimat al-Ilahiyah*, Dabhel, al-Majlis al-'Ilmi, n.d.
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12. *Ibid.* pp. 53-54, *Hujjat, op. cit.*, vol. 2, pp. 39-40
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32. *Hujjat*, vol. 2, pp. 112-113.
33. *Ibid.* pp. 114-116.
34. *Ibid.* p. 116. This view is held by him although some others do not agree that the donor's right of ownership rests with him.
35. *al-Budur*, 69, 78; *Hujjat*, vol. 2, p. 106.
36. *Hujjat*, vol. 2, p. 106.
37. *Hujjat*, vol. 2. p. 106.

38. *Ibid.* p. 107.
39. *Ibid.*
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